

Virginia Emergency Operations Center (VEOC)

Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)

2007 DROUGHT AND BURN BAN SITUATION REPORT # 2 1 November 2007, 1500 Hours

New Information in Bold Italic Type

SUMMARY

Statewide precipitation for the previous water year (1 October 2006 through 30 September 2007) was below normal. ***Despite recent precipitation***, exceptional drought conditions persist in portions of southwest Virginia. The current drought conditions have created the potential for widespread and very dangerous forest fires throughout the Commonwealth.

EXECUTIVE ACTION

EOC Activation: The Virginia Emergency Operations Center is at Routine status and is operating with normal staff.

State of Emergency: Governor Timothy M. Kaine declared a Statewide Emergency on 18 October 2007 and imposed a statewide ban on all open burning effective immediately. The Governor specifically authorized the immediate placement of Virginia National Guard assets for deployment to assist the Virginia Department of Forestry, upon its request, in fighting and mitigating the effects of fires and directed State Agencies provide assistance in dealing with potential or actual drought related issues.

Governor Kaine requested that the Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture declare Virginia a statewide disaster area due to reductions in farm production caused by drought and high temperatures in 2007 on 1 October 2007. The Acting US Secretary of Agriculture designated 78 additional counties and 34 independent cities as primary natural disaster areas on 18 October 2007 due to reductions in farm production caused by drought and high temperatures that occurred from January 1, 2007, and continuing.

Governor Kaine held a Press Conference on 30 October and urged localities to update water conservation and drought contingency ordinances and plans and begin preparations to implement those plans. The Governor also encouraged citizens and businesses to strictly follow all calls for water conservation issued by public waterworks or local governments. [Governor's News Release](#)

Executive Order: [Executive Order 57 \(2007\)](#)

WEATHER FORECAST

Thursday, 1 Nov: Partly sunny with a 30 percent chance of precipitation in Southeast VA; high temperatures will range low 60's to mid 70's; West-southwest winds 5 to 15 MPH. **Thursday night:** Partly cloudy; low temperatures will range mid 30's to mid 40's; North winds 15 to 20 MPH in Southeast VA with north-northeast winds 5 to 10 MPH for the rest of the Commonwealth. **Friday, 2 Nov:** Sunny; high temperatures will range mid 50's to low 60's; north winds 10 to 15 MPH. **Friday night:** Clear; low temperatures will range low to mid 30's; North winds 5 to 10 MPH.

OPERATIONS SECTION

ESF 5 – Emergency Management: *Posting event related items to WebEOC under event titled “WebEOC, 2007-10 Drought and Burn Ban”*; Participating as member of the Drought

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Monitoring Task Force; monitoring weather, river flow and precipitation reports; coordinating conference calls; assessing the impact across the Commonwealth

State Warning Point: Normal operations

Local Liaison: VDEM Regional Coordinators polling localities reference drought impacts. VDEM Region Four Coordinator in contact with Wise County and Town of Appalachia reference water supply issue.

EMERGENCY SERVICES BRANCH

ESF 4 – Firefighting: VA Department of Forestry reports that soil and fuel moisture readings at historically low levels in some parts of the Commonwealth and anticipates an exceptionally severe fall wildfire season (15 October – 30 November). ***The statewide rain event last week provided a significant increase in soil moisture levels which does aid fire suppression activities. Wildfire activity has remained light in the period following the rain of last week, although drying conditions have certainly returned the wildfire threat. With the prediction of continued dry weather into next week, it is expected that wildfire activity will be returning to moderate levels (8-12 wildfires per day). The statewide burning ban remains in effect and has helped to hold down wildfire activity as things have dried out since the rain. Over the last three days, the Department of Forestry has responded to 4 fires which have burned 8 acres. Two were the result of debris burning, in violation of the ban, one was arson and one remains under investigation. Shenandoah National Park temporarily lifted their burn ban on 25 October.*** [Statewide and Local Burn Bans/Restrictions](#); [Burn Ban Map](#)

ESF 8 – Public Health & Medical Services: Virginia Department of Health, Office of Drinking Water met with the Town of Appalachia Town Manager and Town Engineer on 23 October to discuss options to maintain water service to customers of the town waterworks. The following two options were discussed:

1. Pump water from the Powell River to the Appalachia reservoir; this was done several years ago during a water shortage, but the infrastructure installed at that time is gone. Town Engineer will work with VA Department of Environmental Quality to obtain an emergency withdrawal permit and attempt to determine how long the Powell River will remain a viable source
2. Pursue utilizing the Osaka wells; previously used as emergency source, but are aesthetically unpleasing. Water is high in iron, manganese and hydrogen sulfide concentrations

Virginia Department of Health and Office of Drinking Water continue to monitor and stand by for consultation and coordination.

HUMAN SERVICES BRANCH

ESF 11 – Agriculture and Natural Resources: Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) reported that all counties and independent cities in the Commonwealth have been designated primary disaster areas with the exception of the counties of Arlington and York and the independent cities of Alexandria, Bristol, Falls Church, Norton and Poquoson. These localities have been designated contiguous disaster areas. All Virginia localities have access to federal drought disaster assistance. VDACS launched a new drought Web page to provide farmers with up-to-date information. ***VDACS regional marketing representatives report that the recent rains will not benefit corn or soybean crops. The rainfall did benefit wheat and barley planting and will allow germination of wheat and barley seeds. Cotton crop got soaked but will dry out and be ready for harvesting next month.*** [VDACS Drought Related Information](#).

The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries reports that the significant deterioration in stream flows across the State have resulted in reduced recreational

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opportunities. Boating opportunities are very limited on nearly all rivers and streams. The fall trout stocking schedule has been significantly curtailed due to low water conditions in western Virginia. On 13 October the Department issued a ban on all open burning on wildlife management areas.

INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT BRANCH

ESF 3 – Public Works & Engineering: The Virginia Department of Health has not reported any impacts to public water supplies that have compromised their ability to provide the needs of their customers; 32 systems have initiated voluntary water conservation requirements and 23 systems have initiated mandatory water conservation requirements.

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality chairs the Drought Monitoring Task Force and issues a monthly report. The drought is beginning to cause major concern in the management of our large reservoirs. Fortunately, the majority of declines occurred late in the summer and early fall so recreation was not severely impacted. Focus is shifting toward making sure the large reservoirs return to their normal levels by the spring of 2008. ***The recent precipitation eliminated most short term drought impacts, but the underlying precipitation deficit remains. Streamflows rebounded statewide after the rain event last week but, they are dropping back down quickly. Southwest Virginia received the least amount of benefit from the recent rainfall. Without additional precipitation, conditions will slowly deteriorate through the fall/winter. Waterworks are encouraged to develop water conservation and contingency plans and local governments are encouraged to adopt local water conservation ordinances.*** [DEQ Water Conservation Tips](#); [Drought Monitoring Task Force Report 22 Oct 07](#)

PLANNING SECTION

Situation/Documentation Unit: Preparing and distributing weekly Situation Reports, monitoring WebEOC entries and maintaining situational awareness. ***Next Situation Report will be issued Thursday, 8 November 2007.***

Mapping/GIS Unit: Providing maps and graphics related to drought and burn ban.

LOCAL ACTIVITIES

Wise County declared a local emergency on 31 October due to drought conditions that have caused a severe raw water supply shortage to retail water customers in Wise County. The resolution requests that voluntary water restrictions and conservation efforts be encouraged to conserve water and reduce usage. The Mayor and Town Council of Appalachia, Wise County, declared a water emergency and implemented conservation measures and prohibited non-essential water usage.

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